

## Word Chess With a Vengeance

H	C	K	B	X
O	M	E	N	D
P	S	T	A	L
J	Y	R	I	G
Z	W	V	F	U

Depicted at the left is an innocent-looking letter square. The square was devised by Dr. Jean C. Sabine, of Belmont, California. Dr. Sabine's square presents our readers with a remarkable problem in "word chess," an exercise that has previously appeared in the "Simplicissimi" section of WORD WAYS.

The problem posed is to start at any desired letter in the square and to move one and only one space up or down or left or right or diagonally, until an English word of FIVE or more letters has been traced out. Naturally, many shorter words can be traced in the square—BEND, GIRT, and LIAR, for instance—but these shorter words are too easy to find, so that we have restricted the problem to words of at least five letters.

There are a number of conditions governing word chess. For one thing, any given letter square may not be used more than once for one word. Thus, the word SEATS cannot be traced out, because there is only one letter S. More generally, all allowable words that can be formed are words in which no letter of the alphabet appears more than once, since the letter square uses 25 different letters of the alphabet, each one once. (The letter Q has been omitted.)

Furthermore, certain classes of words usually regarded as objectionable have been ruled out of bounds for this problem: slang, proper nouns, obsolete and foreign words, abbreviations and contractions, reformed spellings, dialectal, provincial, and Scottish words, plural nouns ending in "S" (unless the singular form does not exist in English), and verbal past tenses ending in "D."

On the other hand, rare and archaic words are acceptable (on the ground that there is something pleasantly nostalgic about them), as are two-word terms and hyphenated words found as actual dictionary entries. Two or more related words (CLOUD and CLOUDY, for example) are accepted if they satisfy all other conditions.

Conforming to these rules, Dr. Sabine has discovered 110—yes, one hundred and ten—words of five or more letters in her square, including 16 seven-letter words, 3 eight-letter words, and 1 eleven-letter word.

Yet, the list is not complete—such lists never can be. What reader of WORD WAYS can find the largest number of words overlooked by Dr. Sabine?

For comparison purposes, the constructor's alphabetized list is reproduced in the "Solutions" section—see page 253 of this issue.

Happy word hunting!